DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 444 061 CG 030 156

AUTHOR Kurhila, Asta; Onnismaa, Jussi
TITLE Career Development in Finland.
PUB DATE 2000-03-00
NOTE 21p.; In: Making Waves: Career Development and Public Policy. International Symposium 1999 Papers, Proceedings, and Strategies (Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, May 2-4, 1999); see CG 030 145.
PUB TYPE Opinion Papers (120) -- Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Adult Vocational Education; *Career Development; Career Guidance; Cooperation; Foreign Countries; *Government Role; Labor Force Development; Postsecondary Education; *Public Policy; Secondary Education; Secondary School Students
IDENTIFIERS *Finland

ABSTRACT

Finland has a strong professional guidance and counseling system. Guidance counselors from the labor administration and vocational guidance psychologists are available in the school systems. In the past, particularly strong emphasis was placed on guidance classes within the curriculum. Now, however, the time prescribed for such classes has been reduced, and greater autonomy in resource allocation and curriculum control has devolved to local municipalities and schools. This permits greater diversity of guidance provision. Some of the current policy issues facing Finland include cooperation between institutions providing education and career guidance; labor market support for young people; programs for prevention of social exclusion; a new curriculum for a transitional year in comprehensive schools; and the National Age Program established to improve the position of those over age 45 in the job and education markets. Key issues and action steps proposed for the future include: counseling in educational institutions; challenges to counseling in labor administration; counseling in adult education; development of a culture of cooperation; on-the-job learning; cross-cultural counseling; regional centers of excellence in counseling; strengthening the professionalism of counseling; and the need for ethical discussion. (Contains 15 References.) (JDM)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 444 061

Career Development In Finland

By

Asta Kurhila
Jussi Onnismaa

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

2B

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

CG030156

12. CAREER DEVELOPMENT IN FINLAND

Asta Kurhila and Jussi Onnismaa, National Board of Education*

Guidance has a more important role because of recent economic difficulties in Finland. Due to changes in society, job insecurity has increased, making people feel they have less control over their own lives. Atypical work contracts, job swapping and vocational retraining are typical features of Finnish society today. There is high unemployment (21 percent in 1994 and 10 percent in 1999), especially among young people aged 15 to 24 (37 percent in 1994 and 28 percent 1998). While this increases the need for guidance services, it also means that such services are at risk because of accompanying cuts in public expenditures. In practice, staffing resources for guidance have been largely protected from these cuts so far. Concerns remain, however, that financial pressure on schools, accompanied by greater devolution of resource allocation, could result in a deterioration of guidance provision within the school system. It is important that this be monitored regularly at a national level (Watts, 1995).

Lifelong Learning – Lifelong Guidance

Individual and cross-sector study programs will become more common in the future. Consequently, clients will need information and guidance in order to benefit fully from these new educational and vocational opportunities. The development of guidance methods for adults and co-operation with the developing adult education system will increase the need for guidance.

In the reports of the European Union and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), counselling is described as a facilitator of lifelong learning. Inadequate or ineffective counselling limits people's chances of using appropriate supports for lifelong learning. At transition times, appropriate systems for guidance and counselling are crucial. However, in Finland, counselling has not yet been clearly identified as a facilitator of lifelong learning. In recent years, guidance and counselling services have increased, but counselling continues to be "invisible" in the eyes of decision makers. However in Finland, the law guarantees young people access to career services. Ideally, legislation would ensure lifelong guidance for all.

Counselling and the New Career

Profound changes in work make it necessary to reconceptualize the term career. New careers are more fragmented and they highlight the need for lifelong learning and an appropriate strategy for career guidance, especially during career transitions (Arnold and Jackson, 1997). Perhaps the most significant aspect of the "new career" is the subjective career (i.e., how

individuals make sense of their careers, their personal histories and the skills, attitudes and beliefs they have acquired) (Arnold and Jackson, 1997). Meijers (1998) suggests that individuals not only have to acquire specific career skills, but also a *career identity*. Richardson (1998) continues, arguing that the social location of career takes on a different meaning when there are multiple career moves across a range of organizations, occupations and professions. The present world seems to require persons able to evolve continually and self-generate in their lives and in their careers. As Savickas (1999) points out, career planning is being replaced by career management.

Giddens (1994) claims that transitions in individuals' lives have always demanded psychic reorganization, something that often was ritualized as *rites de passage*. In modern settings, the self has to be explored and constructed as part of a reflexive process connecting personal and social change. Each of us *has* but also *lives* a biography reflexively, organized according to flows of social and psychological information about possible ways of life. The question: "How shall I live?" has to be answered in day-to-day decisions. Consequently, in a world of alternative lifestyle options, strategic life planning achieves special importance (Giddens, 1994). Career development should be combined with overall life planning. Thus, counselling should support those life-planning skills that equip individuals to cope with new and unforeseeable situations.

The Finnish Education and Training System

Finnish education policy offers all citizens equal opportunities to obtain an education, regardless of age, domicile, economic situation, sex or mother tongue. Education is considered one of a citizen's basic rights. The education system is organized into several levels.

- **Preschool education** is mainly given in daycare centres administered by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. It is not obligatory and its aim is to enhance the learning skills of children.

- **Compulsory education** (comprehensive school) lasts nine years, beginning in the autumn of the year a child turns 7.

- **Upper secondary education** leads to the national matriculation examination and qualifies students for all higher education studies.

- **Vocational training** provides young people with a vocational qualification and the skills enabling them to maintain it, and qualifies them for further studies. The training is developed in close co-operation with trade and industry.

- **Apprenticeship training.** Both adults and young people can acquire a vocational qualification through apprenticeship training. Vocational skills are learned while working, supplemented by theoretical studies.

- **Polytechnics.** The introduction of experimental polytechnics (AMK institutions) in 1991 started the development of a separate sector of non-university higher education in Finland.

- **Universities** engage in research and offer basic and further academic education up to the doctorate level. There are 20 universities in Finland with a total of about 140,000 students.

- **The Finnish adult education system** is divided into two main sectors:
  - Liberal and general education consists of folk high schools, study centres and summer universities that offer non-formal education for adults. Adults can complete a whole comprehensive school or upper secondary school course or study individual subjects. Other forms are open university and language skills tests.
  - Vocational education and training is provided for adults who are, or have been, active in working life. At the beginning of the studies, a personal study program is made for each student. Vocational training for adults is divided into self-motivated training, in-service training and labour market training. Adults have the opportunity to obtain a formal vocational qualification through special skills tests irrespective of how they acquired their skills in the first place (competence-based vocational qualifications).

Key Points for Decisions within the Education and Training System

In Finland, there are three main points where career-related decisions are made:

- At age 13, young people move from the lower stage of comprehensive schools to the upper stage. New legislation has abolished the barrier between the lower and upper stage, making the transition easier for students.

- At age 16, over half of the comprehensive school leavers move on to the upper secondary school, while about one third opt for vocational training (some of the rest enter work-based apprenticeships).

- Around age 19, the picture becomes more complex. Of those who graduate from upper secondary school, almost 50 percent continue their studies in universities or polytechnics. The rest opt for other education or training, or enter the labour marker. Some take a year off or do military service, which is compulsory for boys, voluntary for girls.

Structure of the Guidance System

Finland has a strongly professionalized guidance and counselling system. Within the school system, particularly the upper levels of comprehensive schools, there are guidance counsellors from the labour administration and also vocational guidance psychologists. Both groups are highly qualified by international standards (Watts, 1995). Until recently, the structure of guidance delivery within the school system was clearly prescribed by the Ministry of Education and the National Board of Education. Particularly strong emphasis was placed on guidance classes within the curriculum. Now, however, the time prescribed for such classes has been reduced. Moreover, greater autonomy in resource allocation and curriculum control has devolved to local municipalities and schools. This is permitting greater diversity of guidance provision (Watts, 1995).

Both the labour administration and the educational system have a legal responsibility to provide career services. Until 1991, vocational guidance and placement were a state monopoly. Thus, although the role of voluntary and private organizations has been insignificant in the past, this is gradually changing. A few voluntary organizations provide guidance to young people in danger of social exclusion. Several youth organizations provide information and advice relating to careers. During the past year, the biggest newspaper in Finland (*Helsingin sanomat*) has started to offer free career services on its Web page. There has also been some growth of private sector placement agencies, headhunting services and outplacement services for employers.

Counsellor Training in Finland

Vocational guidance developed under the labour administration. From the start, it was based on psychology, and Finland's first vocational guidance counsellors were qualified psychologists (master's degree). For new vocational guidance psychologists, the Ministry of Labour organizes 55 days of initial training in the vocational specialization. An important development in university graduate studies is the establishment of four-year scientific-professional licentiate programs in psychology and in educational sciences.

The school guidance system was developed under the Ministry of Education. Guidance counsellors are qualified teachers with special training in career counselling. The theoretical basis and orientation of their work centres on educational psychology and educational sociology. Guidance counsellor training is provided through faculties of education at a master's degree level (Nummenmaa and Sinisalo, 1997).

Guidance and Counselling at Educational Institutions

Within the school system, there is a strong move to reduce control by the state and move to more autonomous local decision making. For example, the National Board of Education continues to carry out periodic reviews of the school system, but it is developing tools for school self-evaluation. To date, these reviews have not focussed specifically on the guidance service. Greater devolution should increase the capacity for local innovation. There could be scope for exploring more diverse patterns of classroom guidance and individual counselling, and more flexible partnerships between guidance counsellors, classroom teachers, group leaders and subject teachers. The current situation is summarized in Table 1 and highlighted below.

- Pupils in **comprehensive schools** receive educational and vocational guidance and counselling mainly during their last three years of school. Each pupil has at least two hours weekly of counselling classes, dealing with study skills, self-knowledge, vocations and working life. If needed, pupils also receive personal counselling about studies, further education and career choices.

- **Upper secondary schools.** A large number of the 50 percent of the students moving from comprehensive education to upper secondary schools still do not have clear career plans. They need guidance to help them choose subjects and make future plans. The upper secondary school curriculum includes one course (38 hours) devoted to guidance.

- **Vocational education.** Students attending vocational schools are entitled to receive personal and other necessary counselling. Counselling on studies is part of the curriculum of the institution. The institution allocates an appropriate amount of time, and makes sure it has the necessary expertise, for the objectives of counselling. At least 1.5 Finnish credit units are allocated over a period of three years.

- **Polytechnics.** The guidance and counselling services are currently being established in the majority of the new polytechnics. However, those polytechnics that have been operating for a longer time have already set up services that give their students, and those seeking admittance, guidance in issues concerning studies, practical training and career choice.

Table 1: The Finnish Guidance and Counselling System

School Level	Guidance Personnel	Methods
Comprehensive schools (Grades 7 - 9)	• Guidance counsellors • (Teacher training +1 year specialist training)	• Classes (minimum of 2 x 38 h) • Study visits • Visits to workplaces, internship • Personal counselling
Upper secondary schools	• Guidance counsellors • (Teacher training + specialist training) • Group advisers, other teachers	• Classes (1 course = 38 h) • Study visits • Visits to workplaces • Personal counselling
Vocational schools	• Guidance counsellors • (Teacher training + specialist training) • All teachers	• Separate classes (1.5 credits) • Integration into other instruction • Personal counselling • Study visits • Learning at workplace
Polytechnics	• Specialized counsellors	• Personal counselling • Integration into other instruction • Career services centres • Student affairs counselling
Universities	• Specialized counsellors	• Personal counselling • Integration into other instruction • Career services centres • Student affairs counselling

Table 1 (continued)

School Level	Guidance Personnel	Methods
Employment offices: *Vocational guidance*	• Vocational guidance psychologists (master's in psychology)	• Personal and group counselling • Aptitude tests • Work training and training experiments
Employment offices: *Career counselling*	• Employment counsellors (master's in sociology, social policy, etc.)	• Personal and group counselling • Work training and training experiments
Employment offices: *Training and vocational information service*	• Employment consultants (post-secondary vocational training)	• Personal and group counselling • Lending service • Self-service
Employment offices: *Employment exchange service*	• Employment consultants (post-secondary vocational training)	• Personal employment exchange service • Informative employment exchange service • Self-service

- **Universities** provide general student counselling for their students and those seeking admittance. The organization of these services varies across universities. Usually, there is a special office for student guidance, where students receive information about studies, practical training, open university courses and employment. A special financial aid office deals with student welfare services. The goal of the university career services centres is to help students enter the labour market and to serve employers by offering them help in recruiting new employees. The career centre is an independent unit, usually with good resources. The career services centres co-operate closely with local employment offices.

Career Guidance by the Finnish Labour Administration

Labour administration is organized in three tiers:

- Ministry of Labour;
- Employment and Economic Development Centres (TEK) (15); and
- employment offices (180).

The introduction of "management by results" measures are encouraging priority (including queue jumping) to be given to particular target groups. In general, innovation tends to be fairly slow, but when changes are made, they are implemented across the service (Watts, 1995). The services are free for individual clients, though employers are charged for some services. The Employment and Economic Development Centres (TEK) promote trade and industry at the regional level. Their labour market departments are responsible for enforcing regional labour force policy and for monitoring employment offices. The employment offices closely co-operate with educational and training institutions in the provision of guidance and counselling services.

- **Vocational guidance services** in employment offices are provided free of charge for all young people and adults. Vocational guidance psychologists help individuals deal with career choice, professional development and employment, taking into account individual qualities of clients, and available educational and work opportunities.

- **Career guidance services** are provided by, for example, vocational adult education centres. They cover special training to help young people or adults in transition identify available options.

- **Training and vocational information services** in employment offices provide information on training, occupations, working life and financing of studies. This information is available on a walk-in basis. A wide collection of publications, guides, brochures and videos about

educational and training institutions, study programs and vocations are available for clients. Some of the material can be borrowed.

- **Immigrants** permanently residing in Finland are entitled to the same services in employment offices as Finnish citizens. In the biggest employment offices, there are international employment consultants who specialize in serving migrants. They help migrants find jobs and deal with other important issues.

- There are **co-ordinating mechanisms** at a variety of levels between guidance services in schools and the labour administration. The nature of the co-operation varies locally and regionally. At a local level, it can involve employment officers and career counsellors agreeing on when to refer students to vocational guidance psychologists, the kinds of consultation and services provided, and when the services are to be provided. The extent of co-operation depends on the relationship between the vocational guidance psychologists and the guidance counsellors at a particular locale.

- **The European Employment Services.** Finnish employment offices are part of the EURES employment exchange system of the European Commission. In addition to the European Union member states, Norway and Iceland are also included in the system. EURES provides guidance, information and employment exchange services for those who seek jobs in other European countries. It is also a forum for employers to advertise vacancies and to recruit employees. All the services are free of charge.

Other Providers

The **Centre For International Mobility** (CIMO) advances international mobility in education, training, work and youth. CIMO belongs to the network of National Resource Centres for Guidance (NRCG) that operates in the EU and European Environment Agency (EEA) countries. The main goal of the centres is to promote a European dimension in the national structures of educational and vocational guidance. The network receives funding from the European Commission, and in addition, the ministries of Education and Labour fund CIMO as the Finnish National Resource Centre for Guidance.

Current Policy Issues

Obligations for Inter-Institutional Co-operation

Legislation reform governing general upper secondary, vocational and adult education came into force January 1, 1999. The previous fragmented institutional legislation was made more concise and functional. The new

act creates freedom for students to study what they want and includes obligations for inter-institutional co-operation in several areas:

- Institutions providing basic education must co-operate with other educational institutions in their region. Co-operation must be practised across vocational institutions, upper secondary schools, universities and polytechnics.

- Students have the right to transfer credits across institutions as long as the objectives and contents meet the core curriculum requirements.

- The curriculum needs to be designed so it enables students to make individual choices regardless of the institution they are enrolled in and based on the wide selection of courses offered in their region.

- The right to select courses from different institutions, and the right to transfer credits, increases the demand for career counselling services. It also creates additional demands for guidance counsellors, as they need to be aware of the objectives and contents of all the institutions in the area in order to support students in creating an individual course of study.

Labour Market Support for Young People

One of the most important training and labour market policy decisions of the 1990s occurred in 1996. The right to receive labour market support was abolished for uneducated young people who do not apply for admission to a vocational institution or participate in labour policy measures. Vehvilainen (1999) analyzed the effects of these measures and concluded that most young people apply for admission to vocational institutions or take part in labour policy measures, more or less out of necessity. This increases the probability of their dropping out. Several concerns and suggestions stem from Vehvilainen's study. It is apparent that this new policy affects the lives of young people and exerts pressure on their educational and vocational choices. We need to ensure that the policy is amended by proper career development services. Finally, there is a strong need for more individual services. When analyzing the results of labour and training policy, we need to look at the duration and permanence of the choices young people make. This may become a key challenge of future policy and practice.

Programs for the Prevention of Social Exclusion

The marginalization process may begin in childhood if support for the child in the home is poor. Economic recession and unemployment may undermine the family's chances of offering children and young people what it takes for a good life. For these reasons, day-care centres and schools play an important role in supporting and identifying children who

are at risk of social exclusion. For both the development of the individual child and the goals of the school, it is important that day care and preschool education be perceived as part of the system for bringing up children and educating them. To identify groups at risk, requires broad-based monitoring of children's development, beginning at an early stage. This necessitates co-operation by the children's welfare clinic, the day-care centre, the school and the home. Children benefit most from support given at an early stage.

There is a need for intensified personal counselling and support when young people move from the comprehensive school to the secondary school and when they transfer from secondary school to further education. In second-degree educational institutions, the national dropout rate is almost 10 percent. Those who acquire no professional training are at a greater risk of being marginalized. Thus, there is an increasing need for pupil services in second-degree institutions.

School atmosphere and culture should focus on improving:

- ways to deal with and listen to pupils;
- ways of involving pupils in decision making relating to their studies;
- the early identification of problems and tackling them rapidly; and
- multi-professional co-operation with interest groups in order to prevent marginalization.

There is also a need to develop more pupil-centred teaching methods.

The project of the National Board of Education for the prevention of marginalization for 1998 to 2002 emphasizes preventive work to be undertaken at many levels.

A New Curriculum for a Transitional Year in Comprehensive School

Annually, about 11 percent of Finnish students do not attend secondary education immediately after completing comprehensive school. They might not be sure of their future plans or they are at risk of social exclusion. After August 1999, students who have completed their comprehensive education can arrange a transitional year. The key issue during this transitional year is guidance integrated with individual learning commitment and an action plan. There are no compulsory subjects. Individual students have an opportunity to achieve better grades in subjects they decide are relevant to their future plans. Each student will have a personal tutor to help plan and evaluate the individual learning contract, in co-operation with the student and the school counsellor. The tutor also helps students complete a personal portfolio. Additionally, the tutor will take care of the co-ordination between people who are arranging the relevant learning environments. This is a new role for Finnish teachers,

and there is now a demand for staff development programs for these tutors.

On-the-Job Learning and New Vocational Qualifications
Vocational education in the upper secondary level is to undergo a thorough reform by the end of 2001. A main feature is the development of three-year qualifications in all fields that incorporate on-the-job learning and proof of professional know-how. The need for counselling as part of this process will be emphasized. Vocational qualifications will be similar, regardless of whether they are taken in a traditional form or in a competence-based approach.

The function of the vocational qualification reform is to provide broad-based key competencies in different areas, and more specific competencies and professional skills in sub-fields of the qualification. The qualification will be a broad-based classification of what skills are required in real working life. The key competencies of vocational qualifications will be used to create effective training programs. All students will be able to take a test to demonstrate their competencies.

All qualifications are to include at least 20 Finnish credits of on-the-job experiences. In the case of qualifications taken as basic education, a skills test, planned in collaboration with business, will be added to demonstrate movement toward achieving objectives. The basis for the curriculum and skill tests will mostly be the same for youth and adult vocational training programs.

Career Services of Vocational Schools and Polytechnics
In 1996, a career services project was launched in vocational schools and polytechnics in co-operation with employment offices. The project helps students enter the labour market or seek further training. The person responsible for career services in vocational schools is usually the guidance counsellor. Polytechnics generally employ a person specifically to take care of these services. Employment offices designate one of their employees to co-ordinate career services with the educational institutions. A network of educational institutions and employment offices is being created. The career services consist of:

- individual guidance, counselling and planning services;
- employment exchange and co-operation with employers;
- self-service points with access to the Internet and information material;
- placement of students in further education or in work, and follow-up on those placements; and
- teaching entrepreneurial skills and advising how to set up a business.

Employment Offices Renew Their Client Service Process
A job application strategy will be made for every job-seeking client at every employment office. This is the client's right. It is also the intention to have clients commit to carrying out their own part of the agreed on plan. Before beginning vocational education and training, a personal study program (PSP) is made for each adult student in Finland. In the PSP, previous studies and relevant work experiences are listed. Work and study experience, and even leisure activities, can prove beneficial to the individual in the present studies.

The process begins with an assessment of capabilities noting the skills obtained through earlier education, professional and general qualifications of the client, special abilities and personal wishes. These are assessed in relation to the needs for professional competence. At this point, an initial definition will be made of the individual's capacity for learning and of the possibility of earlier accomplishments being accredited toward an educational goal. The assessment of capabilities also will be used later to assess client progress. When a client decides to undertake some education, the assessment of capabilities serves as the starting point for an educator to draw up a personal study program. At this point, a decision is made on previous studies to be accredited, further study and on-the-job learning.

A good PSP is seen as a dynamic way of thinking. When PSP practices are developed as a way of thinking, and as an instrument for creating a learning environment and an organizational culture, they also promote student self-assessment, career planning and general life planning as an integral part of studies. The development of PSPs is successful when they are combined with sufficient individual and group counselling. In Finland, several new projects have been launched to develop good PSP practices. Most are based on the idea that counselling and guidance, both group and individual, form a concurrent process supporting learning activity during vocational training. According to Peavy (1995), skills training tends to be a de-contextualizing process, and reflexivity redresses this imbalance in that it promotes contextualization (understanding what one is doing, and why one is doing it) and promotes the discernment of assumptions and tacit knowledge. PSP practices can be regarded as an attempt to re-contextualize adult learning by *re-personalizing* study experiences.

National Age Program 1998-2002
Discrimination on the grounds of age affects many people when they apply for jobs, at work and in developing their careers. There may be room for improvement in attitudes, roles at work, management systems and personnel policy in many workplaces. The objective is to make it possible to create a personal career in such a way that the effects and strengths of aging can be considered. The responsibility for a program's success lies with employers, employees and decision makers.

The National Age Program 1998-2002 is an attempt to improve the position of those over age 45 on the job and in education markets. The program will be carried out with the co-operation of several ministries. Other co-operating partners will be expert organizations representing occupational health care, safety at the workplace, early rehabilitation, matters related to pensions, research institutions and experts on working life and learning. Labour market organizations are also involved. The intention is to assess aging and the needs for change in working life, and to disseminate the most recent information on employing older people. One component deals with the need to reform teaching methods for older people with greater use made of the adult professional qualification system. These objectives will be achieved more satisfactorily if guidance and counselling are emphasized equally with training.

Counsellor Training in Transition

Career counselling practice in Finland has traditionally been marked by a strong emphasis on individual and standardized personality assessment. Theoretical support has come from personality and development theories rather than career guidance and counselling theories. Today, career counselling in Finland is experiencing a paradigm shift with the growing influence of systemic family therapy approaches, paradoxical interventions and solution-focussed methods (White and Epston, 1990). The solution-focussed approach was accompanied by neuro-linguistic programming methods. There is also growing interest in the constructivist approach among career counsellors (Onnismaa, 1998). The current shift can be called "paradigmatic" because all the approaches previously mentioned affect the working models of counsellors, their practices and the methods they use, as well as the epistemology of career counselling theories and methods (Nummenmaa and Sinisalo, 1997).

Key Issues for Future Discussion

In Finland, several issues lie on the horizon.

Counselling in Educational Institutions

There are many factors in the structures and curricula of the school system emphasizing the importance of counselling. Counselling is a service for groups of users, both internal and external. Education formerly was implemented in classes, but now is becoming personalized. This affects the basic function of counselling, necessitating a distinction between career information activities and career services. Counselling should not be contemplated from the standpoint of an individual guidance counsellor, as this produces a risk that counselling will be marginalized. Individual guidance counsellors cannot handle the growing need for counselling. Furthermore, guidance counsellors no longer have a monopoly on the dissemination of information for personal career planning. As educational

structures open up and co-operation among institutions increases, the need for personal counselling also will increase.

Challenges to Counselling in Labour Administration

The client groups at risk of marginalization include older individuals, those in poor health, the long-term unemployed and combinations of these. On the one hand, young people and ethnic minorities find it difficult to break into the job market. The unemployment rate among immigrants is 40 percent. Mental health problems are an obstacle to gaining employment. The volume of supported employment has decreased. The typical methods used in employment offices are not up to the challenge. In these cases, more emphasis should be given to training combined with supported employment, traineeships and work experiments.

The public sector needs to address uncertainty in the labour force and short-term employment. Present markets emphasize greater professional skill than before and, consequently, the risk of marginalization is increased. If counselling is to address this need, it must be a more long-term undertaking, more enduring, more personal, more therapeutic, and it should build more professional competencies than it does at present. Counselling also needs to address emotional problems (prevention of burnout) and, at the same time, society should set up a better safety net. The fundamental question in counselling is how individuals can build a functional career. It is really important to have an understanding of the opportunities in working life.

Adult Counselling

In Finland, the need for counselling in adult education has become apparent. As the move to replace conventional teaching with self-directed study and open learning principles has become better established, it has also become obvious that there is no road back to traditional pedagogy. Thus, counselling has had to adjust its working methods and become more open to innovation. Adult counselling is not a new and discrete professional field, but it requires a qualitative change among those doing interactive work, as the old models for helping and counselling prove irrelevant and even dysfunctional in vastly changed circumstances. These changes have affected not only educational institutions, but also planners and directors of education, those in private organizations (workplace educators and consultants) and on the counselling scene (career advisers, employment advisers, study advisers), those in management and social work, and all those concerned with careers and life course. Open learning environments and self-directed learning are not based on counselling to support teaching, but on counselling to support learning, which is integrated and conducive to life-course planning (Vahamottonen, 1998).

Action Steps

- **Culture for co-operative practices.** Financing from the European Union has fostered co-operation among organizations working toward improving the position of various groups (young people entering working life, immigrants, the long-term unemployed, the older generation, etc.) A culture of co-operation needs to be developed to ensure the continuation of these partnerships after EU financing is over.

- **Counselling and on-the-job learning.** On-the-job learning is playing a more important part of vocational education for young people and adults. On-the-job learning goals need to be developed through co-operation between students and educational institutions and workplaces. Every workplace needs to have a person responsible for familiarizing newcomers. Also, the teacher's role will need to change from something that happens exclusively within the educational institution to something that happens on the job.

- **Cross-cultural counselling** is a new challenge for most Finnish counsellors. There are some courses available dealing with multicultural issues in education and counselling. However, more training is needed to provide all counsellors with qualifications to work with clients from different cultures (Lairio and Puukari, 1998).

- **A network of centres of excellence in counselling.** There is a need for regional centres of excellence in counselling which combine practical counselling, resource development, research and counsellor training. The centres could be associated with universities and other educational institutions, thereby ensuring the quality of material produced.

- **Strengthen the professionality of counselling.** Increasingly, counselling methods are being used in other helping professions. There is a need for closer co-operation among professions and for forums to debate professional issues. There also is a need to increase opportunities for further education and supervision for counsellors which, in turn, will strengthen the counselling profession and help counsellors improve their positions within organizations.

- **Cross-organizational project for guidance.** In 1998, the National Board of Education called a meeting aimed at increasing co-operation among career guidance professionals in Finland. In 1999, a working group of career practitioners, researchers and policy makers was established to create "The Finnish Blueprint" to examine career services, find a common language among stakeholders and actively promote guidance practices.

- **The new need for ethical discussion.** Increased uncertainty and the decline of clear-cut guidelines increase the potential for ethical problems. Counselling often concerns issues around boundaries and interfaces (e.g., relations to the client, relations with one's own professional identity, relations to stakeholders or relations between one's own goals and those of the organization) (Nummenmaa and Yli-Vakkuri 1996). To deal with these situations, it is important to develop reflective professional practices, which require time and space for contemplation. Professional ethics cannot become a separate area, but need to be an omnipresent dimension in professional practice.

- **The effectiveness of counselling.** If individuals receiving counselling make meaningful choices and avoid erroneous ones, the resources invested in counselling are easily recuperated. In Finland, the basic attitude to counselling is positive, but when practical decisions are made, counselling is seen as an extra expense. There is a need for research on the effects of counselling for individuals, organizations and society, and for an evaluation of the evaluation methods used in counselling.

- **The need for guidance counsellor training.** Although the number of qualified counsellors has increased during this decade, there is a continued need for counsellor education because of retirement (Lairio and Puukari, 1999). The number of counsellors working full time has risen since the beginning of this decade. Further, the number of people from different professions and sectors doing counselling has increased. The National Board of Education is planning a specialist vocational qualification, whereby professionals working in different fields and organizations can enhance their competence within an adult vocational education framework. This will further add to the need for counsellor training.

References

Arnold, J. and C. Jackson. (1997). "The New Career: Issues and Challenges." *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*. 25: 427-433.

Giddens, A . (1994). *Modernity and self-identity: Self and society in the late modern age*. Cambridge, England: Polity Press.

Lairio, M. and S. Puukari. (1998). "New skills for new futures. Higher education guidance and counselling services in Finland." *FEDORA Project: New Skills for Vocational Guidance in Higher Education in European Union*. Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium.

———. (1999). "Opinto-ohjaajan toimenkuva muuttuvassa yhteiskunnassa." *Koulutuksen tutkimuslaitos.* Jyvaskylan yliopisto.

Meijers, F. (1998). "The development of career identity." *International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling.* 20: 191-207.

Nummenmaa, A.R. and P. Sinisalo. (1997). "Career counselling and counsellor's training in Finland." *Journal of Employment Counselling.* 34: 157-164.

Nummenmaa, A.R. and M. Yli-Vakkuri. (1996). "Oppilaanohjaus eettisina suhteina ja periaatteina." Teoksessa, P. Pitkanen (toim.) *Kasvatuksen etiikka.* Helsinki: Edita.

Onnismaa, J. (1998). "Developing personal study plans in adult vocational education and training." *Constructivism and information technology in careers guidance and counselling: The fourth international conference for trainers of educational and vocational guidance counsellors.* Copenhagen: RUE, The Danish National Council for Educational and Vocational Guidance, pp. 19-22.

Peavy, V. (1995). *An orientation to constructivist career counselling.* Victoria, BC: NorthStar Reseach.

Richardson, M.S, (1998). "Counselling in uncertainty: Empowerment through work and relation practices." *Educational and Vocational Guidance Bulletin.* 62.

Savickas, M. (1999). "Career development and public policy: The role of values, theory and research." In *Career development and public policy: International collaboration for national action.* Edited by B. Hiebert, Ottawa, ON: Canadian Career Development Foundation.

Vahamottonen, T. (1998). "Reframing career counselling in terms of counsellor-client negotiations. An interpretive study of career counselling concepts and practice." *Publications in Social Sciences.* 34, University of Joensuu, Finland.

Vehvilainen, J. (1999). *Pathmakers: Integration of the young into vocational education and working life.*

Watts, A.G. (1995). "Educational and vocational guidance in Finland." *Ammatinvalinnanohjauksen vuosikirja 1995.* Helsinki: Edita.

White, M. and D. Epston. (1990). *Narrative means to therapeutic ends.* New York: Norton.

Endnote

* The following organizations contributed to the production of this paper:

- Ministry of Education
- Ministry of Labour
- National Board of Education
- Centre for International Mobility CIMO
- University of Joensuu
- University of Tampere
- Apaja Centre, University of Helsinki
- Amiedu, Vocational Adult Education Centre
- The Finnish School Counsellors Association
- CareerStorm